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ABSTRACT

There is a lack of consensus in our society about the educational mission of our schools because society itself is in a period of transition about its own values, and this uncertainty translates to what it wants its schools to do. Also researchers in education have avoided topics that might help to inform public debate on educational matters, preferring instead studies that will appeal to a limited number of their peers in related educational fields. While the decisions regarding social goal and purpose rest with the society at large, educators and educational researchers have an important and appropriate role to play in helping to frame the questions of the relationship between the society and its educational institutions and in supplying certain information about what educators can and cannot do. (Author/JMF)

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

To

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PERHAPS YOU WILL PERMIT ME A BIT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION THIS EVENING. TWENTY YEARS AGO I WAS TEACHING HISTORY IN A NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOL, AND MY HUSBAND WAS BEGINNING GRADUATE SCHOOL AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. HE HELD A FELLOWSHIP, A DANFORTH FELLOWSHIP, GIVEN THEN CHIEFLY TO MID-WESTERN YOUNG MEN OF PROTESTANT PERSUASION, MANY OF WHOM HAD MARRIED YOUNG, OFTEN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS, AND HAD GONE OFF WITH THEIR NATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND LACK OF SOPHISTICATION TO THE MAJOR GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF AMERICA. SOME OF THOSE QUALITIES APPLIED TO MY HUSBAND: HE WAS FROM THE MID-WEST; HIS FAMILY, AT LEAST, WAS PROTESTANT; HE HAD MARRIED YOUNG AND TO A FELLOW MID-WESTERNER. THEREFORE, THE PROVISION IN HIS DANFORTH FELLOWSHIP THAT THE DANFORTH FOUNDATION WOULD PAY TUITION COSTS IF HIS WIFE WISHED TO ENROLL IN COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY COURSES INDEED DID INTEREST US. THE INTENT OF THE PROVISION HAD BEEN THAT HUSBANDS WOULD BE ADVANCING RAPIDLY BOTH IN ACADEMIC MATTERS AND IN WORLDLINESS AND THAT SHREWD MILLER, WILLIAM DANFORTH, FEARED THEY WOULD "OUTGROW" THEIR MID-WESTERN WIVES. THUS, HE PROVIDED FOR THE WIVES TO HAVE SOME ANALOGOUS EXPERIENCE BY ENROLLING IN COURSES SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO DO SO. I WAS INTRIGUED BY SUCH A POSSIBILITY SINCE MY OWN HISTORY TRAINING COULD STAND STRENGTHENING NOW THAT I WAS TEACHING FIVE HISTORY COURSES DAILY.

MY CHOICE OF COURSES IN HISTORY AT COLUMBIA WAS DETERMINED BY ONE VITAL CONSIDERATION: WHAT WAS OFFERED AT THE HOUR

THAT MY HUSBAND COULD BABY-SIT WITH OUR TWO YEAR OLD DAUGHTER. THIS MUST BE A TIME WHEN HE WAS NOT IN CLASS AND I WAS NOT TEACHING. THE MAGIC HOURS WERE THURSDAY, 4 TO 6, AND I COMBED THE COLUMBIA CATALOGUE FOR A HISTORY OFFERING AT THAT HOUR. I FOUND ONE, A SEMINAR IN AMERICAN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL HISTORY SINCE 1876. IT REQUIRED PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR, AND I SET ABOUT FINDING THE INSTRUCTOR TO GAIN THE NECESSARY PERMISSION.

I WAS SOMEWHAT DISCONCERTED WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT THE INSTRUCTOR FOR THIS COURSE IN THE GRADUATE FACULTIES HISTORY DEPARTMENT AT COLUMBIA HAD HIS OFFICE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE. I HAD THE FAMILIAR SKEPTICISM FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS. I HAD, IN FACT, VENTURED TO TEACHERS COLLEGE EARLIER TO CONSIDER TAKING ADDITIONAL WORK IN GUIDANCE BUT HAVING BEEN TOLD THAT I WOULD HAVE TO WAIT TWO MONTHS FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH ONE OF THE FACULTY TO DISCUSS SUCH A POSSIBILITY, I CONCLUDED THAT I HAD BETTER REMAIN WITH THE ARTS AND SCIENCES DEPARTMENTS. BUT, THE ONLY HISTORY OFFERING AVAILABLE ON THURSDAY 4-6, MY MAGIC TIME, WAS TAUGHT BY THE MAN WITH THE OFFICE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE SO I WANT TO SEE HIM. HE WAS CORDIAL, INQUIRED WHY I HAD CHOSEN THAT COURSE (I DIDN'T TELL HIM OF MY BABY-SITTING REQUIREMENTS BUT MANIFESTED A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN LATE 19TH CENTURY AND TWENTIETH CENTURY HISTORY - AN INTEREST I SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED!), AND FINALLY THE PROFESSOR, WHOSE NAME I HAD NOT QUITE IDENTIFIED, EXPLAINED THAT THIS SEMINAR REQUIRED SOME KNOWLEDGE OF

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION. "HAD I EVER STUDIED THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION?," HE ASKED. WITH SOME EMBARRASSMENT I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT I HAD INDEED ONCE TAKEN SUCH A COURSE, ONE, FRANKLY, THAT I HAD FOUND MONUMENTALLY BORING. THE PROFESSOR THEN INQUIRED, MOST REASONABLY, WHAT I HAD READ FOR THE COURSE. MY EMBARRASSMENT DEEPENED WHEN ALL I COULD RECALL WAS A TEXT BY "BUTTS AND SOME OTHER MAN." THE YOUNG PROFESSOR GAVE ME A SEARCHING LOOK, APPARENTLY CONCLUDED THAT I WAS AS NAIVE AS MR. DANFORTH HAD FEARED THE WIVES OF HIS FELLOWS WERE LIKELY TO BE, BUT ADMITTED ME TO THE COURSE. THE INTERVIEW ENDED, BUT I HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE LIBRARY CARD CATALOGUE DOWN THE HALL FROM THE PROFESSOR'S OFFICE FOR I SENSED THAT I OUGHT TO ESTABLISH QUICKLY WHO THE SECOND AUTHOR WITH R. FREEMAN BUTTS OF A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN AMERICAN CULTURE WAS. IT WAS, OF COURSE, LAWRENCE A. CREMIN, THE PROFESSOR WHO HAD JUST ADMITTED ME TO THE HISTORY SEMINAR.

FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, MOSTLY NOT OF MY OWN INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY, I WROTE A PAPER FOR THAT SEMINAR ON THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. THAT PAPER BECAME THE GENESIS OF MY THESIS AND LATER OF A BOOK ON THE PEA. I WISH THAT I COULD SAY THAT I HAD HAD THE GOOD JUDGMENT TO CHOOSE SUCH A TOPIC BECAUSE OF THE MARVELLOUS INTRODUCTION THAT IT PROVIDED TO THE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES CURRENT IN THIS COUNTRY DURING THE EARLY AND MIDDLE YEARS OF THIS CENTURY. I DID NOT; I WROTE ON IT BECAUSE SOMEONE NEEDED TO AND THE RECORDS WERE AVAILABLE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE AND THEREFORE CONVENIENT TO A YOUNG

MOTHER WITH FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL TO ARCHIVES.

THE END OF THE FIFTIES AND THE EARLY SIXTIES WAS A YEASTY TIME TO BE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE. PARTICULARLY THEY WERE A YEASTY TIME TO BE STUDYING THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT EXISTED. ONE COULD STILL MEET AND TALK WITH PERSONS, WHO HAD PLAYED LEADING ROLES IN THE PEA AND, OF GREATER INTEREST TO ME, HAD WRESTLED WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN AMERICAN AND OTHER SOCIETIES. I MET WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK, GEORGE COUNTS, ISAAC KANDEL, JOHN CHILDS, AND MANY OTHERS. THESE WERE EDUCATORS WHO HAD GIVEN PROFOUND ATTENTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOLS TO THEIR SOCIETY, AND I FOUND THAT ISSUE CONSIDERABLY MORE INTERESTING THAN I DID SOME OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PEREGRINATIONS OF THE PEA.

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1961 MY FAMILY AND I RETURNED FROM A YEAR, MOST OF WHICH HAD BEEN SPENT IN THE USSR WHERE MY HUSBAND HAD BEEN AN EXCHANGE STUDENT AT MOSCOW UNIVERSITY. WE CAME HOME BROKE, NOT SURPRISINGLY. THAT SUMMER MY HUSBAND ANALYZED VOICE OF AMERICA TAPES, AND I WENT TO TEACHERS COLLEGE TO SEE IF I COULD BE HIRED AS A TEACHING ASSISTANT FOR ANYONE. JAY BUTTS WAS TEACHING THAT SUMMER AND HE AGREED TO TAKE ME ON. THE COURSE WAS KNOWN AS 200 FA, THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY, AND THAT MUST HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE LAST TIMES THE COURSE WAS OFFERED. IT HAD BEEN THE KERNEL OF THE OLD FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM THAT HAD BEEN DEVELOPED AT TEACHERS COLLEGE IN THE 1930's.

I WAS DELIGHTED FOR THE WRONG REASON. I WAS FIRST GLAD FOR THE MONEY; THEN I LEARNED HOW FORTUNATE I WAS TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY THAT HAD ORIGINATED SEVERAL DECADES BEFORE AND TO PARTICIPATE IN IT WITH A MAN WHO HAD BEEN PART OF THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EFFORT. FRESH FROM MY FIRST TRIP ABROAD, AND ONE THEN RATHER UNFAMILIAR TO AMERICANS- AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF RESIDENCE IN THE MOSCOW UNIVERSITY DORMITORIES - I WAS RIPE TO CONSIDER ISSUES OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOLS TO THEIR SOCIETY, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SOCIETY SHOULD DETERMINE THE VALUES TO BE TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOLS, AS GEORGE COUNTS HAD URGED NEARLY THREE DECADES EARLIER, IN 200 FA, SHOULD LEAD IN BUILDING A NEW SOCIAL ORDER. I WAS ALSO STRUCK BY THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY THAT THE SOVIET UNION ASSUREDLY WAS AND THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, DESPITE ITS LAPSES, THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS.

THE EARLY 1960'S WAS NOT A PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO PURSUE THESE KINDS OF INVESTIGATIONS. FOR THOSE OF US IN SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION THE ARGUMENT BETWEEN THOSE WHO FAVORED AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF EDUCATION THROUGH THE "FOUNDATIONS" AND THOSE WHO BELIEVED THAT APPROACH HAD BECOME ARID AND THAT A DISCIPLINARY ONE WAS ~~PREFERABLE~~ WAS JUST DEVELOPING. THE ~~DISPUTE~~ SOMETIMES BECAME ENMESHED IN ISSUES OF PROFESSIONAL STATUS, RATHER THAN QUESTIONS OF METHODOLOGICAL MERIT. IN SHORT, THE FOUNDATION VS. DISCIPLINE ISSUE TOOK ON MANY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ACADEMIC ARGUMENT, ONE THAT MEANT MUCH

MORE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY THAN IT DID TO STUDENTS, THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD, OR THE PUBLIC. THE DISCUSSIONS PROVOKED MUCH HEAT, SOME LIGHT, AND SOME NEW ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THIS ONE, THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION. LIKE THE PEA, WHICH WAS FOUNDED AFTER MOST OF THE LINES HAD BEEN DRAWN IN THE ARGUMENT ABOUT PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION, SO AESA, ESTABLISHED IN 1968, CAME INTO BEING AFTER THE INITIAL BATTLE LINES HAD BEEN DRAWN. UNLIKE THE PEA, HOWEVER, AESA NOW HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION AT A TIME WHEN THE PUBLIC IS AGAIN CONCERNED AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT EDUCATIONAL DIRECTION. THAT IS AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY.

MY PLEA, THEN, THIS EVENING IS THAT THOSE OF US WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN OUR SOCIETY ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES FORCEFULLY, RESPONSIBLY, AND PUBLICLY. SO MUCH OF OUR DISCUSSION IN THE PAST HAS BEEN FOCUSSED ON EACH OTHER. NOW, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS THE TIME TO SHIFT OUR CONVERSATION FROM THE ACADEMIC ARENA, WHERE WE RUN THE DANGER OF LETTING OUR CONVERSATIONS BECOME ARID OR AT WORST IRRELEVANT TO THE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES OF THE DAY, AND INSTEAD TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE LARGER QUESTIONS OF THE RELATION OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE SOCIETY.

A PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'S DEMISE WAS ITS ISOLATION FROM THE REAL WORLD OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN THE FORTIES AND THE FIFTIES. THE DESEGREGATION CASES THAT CULMINATED WITH BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION IN 1954 CAME AND WENT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT NOTICE FROM THE PEA. AT THE TIME THE PEA WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH

WITH WHETHER ITS HEADQUARTERS SHOULD BE IN URBANA OR COLUMBUS. THE 1945 HARVARD RED BOOK, GENERAL EDUCATION IN A FREE SOCIETY, PRESUMABLY A SUBJECT OF SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST TO AN ASSOCIATION WHOSE PREEMINENT CONCERNS HAD BEEN CURRICULUM REFORM AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY, RECEIVED ONLY SCANT ATTENTION IN A MONTHLY COLUMN OF THE DIRECTOR. THE REPORT STIRRED WIDE DEBATE IN THE LARGER ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, TWO PARTICULARLY TRENCHANT AND WIDELY READ CRITICS BEING JACQUES BARZAN AND F. O. MATTHIESSEN. IN THESE TWO CASES THE PEA IGNORED SUBJECTS THAT WERE CENTRAL TO THE EDUCATIONAL DEBATE IN THE NATION AND THEREBY ISOLATED ITSELF AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, REMOVED FROM THE PUBLIC DEBATE THOSE OF ITS MEMBERS WHO GAVE THEIR PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL ENERGIES TO THE PEA. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL DEBATE WAS NOT AS HIGH IN THE 40'S AND 50'S AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF PERSONS, SUCH AS THOSE IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION WHO WERE THE LEADERS OF THE PEA, HAD PARTICIPATED. I BELIEVE THE DEBATE WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER AND THE SUBSEQUENT POLICIES WISER IF PERSONS WITH TRAINING IN THE FOUNDATIONS HAD BEEN MORE ACTIVE IN IT.

I RAISE THIS HISTORICAL ANALOGY WITH THE PEA NOT BECAUSE I SEE AN IDENTITY BETWEEN THE PEA OF 25 OR 30 YEARS AGO AND THE AESA OF TODAY. THE PRINCIPAL SIMILARITY IN MY VIEW IS THAT BOTH ORGANIZATIONS ATTRACTED PERSONS WITH INTERESTS IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN THESE TWO PERIODS AND THAT IN BOTH INSTANCES THE PERSONS IN FOUNDATIONS HAVE PREFERRED TO DIRECT THEIR PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL ENERGIES TO THEIR PROFESSION, NARROWLY DEFINED, RATHER THAN MORE BROADLY DEFINED. THE ISSUES WE AS A SOCIETY FACE TODAY IN EDUCATION ARE SO IMPORTANT THAT THEY REQUIRE THE ATTENTION OF AS MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSONS AS WE CAN GET.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE OUGHT NOT TO LEAVE VITAL QUESTIONS TO BE RESOLVED BY STATE LEGISLATURES MANDATING MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING WITHOUT PROVIDING THE LEGISLATORS MORE INFORMATION THAN WE PROFESSIONALS GENERALLY HAVE DONE IN THE PAST ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS OF TESTING AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF UTILIZING TEST RESULTS FOR DIPLOMA PURPOSES. MOST OF THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS WHO HAVE SPOKEN TO THIS TOPIC ARE LOCAL OR STATE SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS OR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION. THEIR TESTIMONY CAN BE DISCREDITED, SHOULD CRITICS CHOOSE TO DO SO, ON THE BASIS THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN IN THEIR SCHOOLS. ON THE WHOLE, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS FROM THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION FIELDS HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, ALTHOUGH THEIR PERSPECTIVE COULD BE A VERY USEFUL ONE ESPECIALLY SINCE THEIR VIEWS MIGHT NOT BE CONSIDERED AS SUSPECT IN PROTECTING THEIR OWN PROFESSION AS THAT OF A SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT. BUT THAT IS NOT WHERE OUR PROFESSIONAL ENERGY HAS GONE. PERHAPS MORE OF IT SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT THOSE KINDS OF ISSUES.

THIS SEEMS TO ME A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TIME TO RAISE THIS MATTER, FOR THE ISSUES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIETY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE RARELY BEEN MORE POIGNANT THAN THEY ARE NOW. I AM STRUCK TODAY BY THE LACK OF CONSENSUS IN OUR SOCIETY ABOUT OUR EDUCATIONAL MISSION. IF WE ASK THE SIMPLE AND PERENNIAL QUESTION, "WHAT DO WE WANT OUR SCHOOLS TO DO?" THERE IS NO EASY OR FAMILIAR RESPONSE. I BELIEVE THAT IS TRUE FOR AT LEAST TWO REASONS: (1) THE SOCIETY ITSELF IS IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION ABOUT ITS OWN VALUES AND THIS UNCERTAINTY TRANSLATES IMMEDIATELY TO WHAT IT WANTS ITS SCHOOLS TO DO, LEAVING EDUCATORS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING AND TEACHING IN THOSE SCHOOLS IN A STATE OF PROFOUND AMBIGUITY ABOUT WHAT THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS FROM THEM AND THEIR

SCHOOLS. (2) RESEARCHERS IN EDUCATION, BOTH IN FOUNDATIONS AND OUTSIDE IT, GENERALLY HAVE ESCHEWED TOPICS THAT MIGHT HELP TO INFORM PUBLIC DEBATE ON EDUCATIONAL MATTERS, PREFERRING INSTEAD STUDIES THAT WILL APPEAL ONLY TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF THEIR PEERS, PEERS EITHER IN RELATED EDUCATIONAL FIELDS OR IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

MY PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT THIS EVENING IS THAT SOCIETY NEEDS TO REACH A GREATER DEGREE OF CONSENSUS THAN IT NOW HAS ABOUT HOW ITS GOALS AND PURPOSE MAY BE REFLECTED IN ITS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. WHILE THE DECISIONS REGARDING SOCIAL GOAL AND PURPOSE REST WITH THE SOCIETY AT LARGE, EDUCATORS AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS HAVE AN IMPORTANT AND APPROPRIATE ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING TO FRAME THE QUESTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIETY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND IN SUPPLYING CERTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT EDUCATORS CAN AND CANNOT DO. IN SHORT, I AM CALLING FOR A REENTRY INTO PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF EDUCATORS TO SPEAK CANDIDLY AND INFORMATIVELY ABOUT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, THEIR POTENTIALITIES AND THEIR LIMITATIONS. PROBABLY THE GROUP OF EDUCATORS BEST EQUIPPED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SOCIAL DEBATE ARE YOU, PERSONS WHO BY TRAINING AND INCLINATION HAVE LOOKED AT EDUCATION IN A BROAD PERSPECTIVE.

HAVING STATED MY TWO ASSERTIONS, LET ME DEVELOP EACH. FIRST, I THINK WE HAVE MANY EXAMPLES AROUND US OF THE UNCERTAINTY WITH WHICH SOCIETY VIEWS ITS OWN EDUCATIONAL VALUES. RECENTLY A PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THE RESULTS OF THE LATEST GALLUP POLL ON THE ATTITUDES OF THE PUBLIC TOWARDS THE SCHOOLS CROSSED MY DESK. ONE COULD ALMOST SEE THE ANGUISHED EXPRESSION ON THE FACE OF THE PERSON ASSIGNED TO WRITE THE PRESS RELEASE SEARCHING THE DATA FOR SOME CLEAR CUT STATISTIC WHICH

MIGHT MAKE A CATCHY LEAD LINE FOR THE RELEASE.

THERE WAS NO SUCH INFORMATION IN THE POLL RESULTS.

YES, THERE WAS AN INTEREST IN BACK TO BASICS, BUT NOT REALLY AT THE EXPENSE OF SO-CALLED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT THE PUBLIC THOUGHT THERE OUGHT TO BE MORE "DISCIPLINE" IN THE SCHOOLS, BUT THERE WAS AS MUCH SUPPORT FOR INSURING THAT SCHOOLS WERE HAPPY, NURTURING PLACES WHERE EACH CHILD RECEIVED CONCENTRATED INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION.

RESPONDENTS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT PERCEIVED LOWERING OF SKILLS IN THE THREE "R'S" BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY WANTED THE SCHOOLS TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO COMBAT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, TO INSURE SAFE DRIVING HABITS, AND TO GUARANTEE THAT YOUTH WOULD BE MORE RESPONSIBLE AS CITIZENS.

ALL OF YOU ARE, OF COURSE, FAMILIAR WITH THE TENDENCY IN AMERICA TO EXPECT THAT OUR SCHOOLS CURE A NUMBER OF ILLS AND PROVIDE A NUMBER OF SERVICES WHICH ARE NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO BASIC LITERACY. THIS SITUATION STILL EXISTS, AND IT IS STILL TRUE THAT MANY OF THESE "FIXES" WHICH THE SOCIETY EXPECTS FROM THE SCHOOLS ARE BEYOND SOLUTION BY THE SCHOOLS THEMSELVES. FREQUENTLY, THEY INVOLVE ISSUES WHICH DEMAND THE ATTENTION OF MAJOR PARTS OF THE REST OF THE SOCIETY.

SOME WANT THE SCHOOLS TO SOLVE THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS OF TEENAGE YOUTH; NOT LIKELY WHEN THE SCHOOLS DO NOT CONTROL THE ECONOMY.

OTHERS WANT THE SCHOOLS TO INCULCATE IN THE YOUNG RIGOROUS WORK HABITS AS IN THE LEGEND OF THE DICKENSIAN BOOKKEEPER; NOT LIKELY WHEN

WHEN PERMISSIVENESS REIGNS IN THE SOCIETY.

STILL OTHER WANT THE SCHOOLS TO GIVE THE YOUNG A CLEAR SENSE OF VALUES AND PURPOSE; NOT LIKELY WHEN THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES CAN NOT AGREE UPON SUCH COMMITMENTS.

YET THERE HAVE BEEN HISTORICAL MOMENTS WHEN THERE WERE CLEAR REQUESTS FOR SOLUTIONS TO SOCIETAL PROBLEMS WHEN THESE REQUESTS WERE CLEAR AND UNAMBIGUOUS, WHEN OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE SOCIETY COOPERATED, AND WHEN THEY WERE CONSISTENT WITH EDUCATIONAL GOALS, AND THEN, THE SCHOOLS RESPONDED WELL.

FOR INSTANCE, THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY EFFORTS TO "AMERICANIZE" IMMIGRANT CHILDREN CLEARLY WERE SUCCESSFUL. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN THIS CASE TWO IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OBTAINED: THERE WAS DISCERNABLE AGREEMENT IN THE SOCIETY ABOUT WHAT WAS WANTED FROM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND THE TASK AT HAND WAS WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF SCHOOLING.

THE CURRENT ABSENCE OF CONSENSUS ABOUT THE PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING MANIFESTS ITSELF IN AT LEAST THREE WAYS. FIRST, THERE IS NOT CLEAR AGREEMENT ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT. TENSION BETWEEN THE NECESSITY FOR ACADEMIC SUBJECTS AND THE DEMAND FOR THE SCHOOLS TO EXERT SOCIAL GUIDANCE REMAINS. THE INCENTIVE SYSTEM IN THE SCHOOLS IS, AS A RESULT OF THIS TENSION, SOMEWHAT SKEWED. PRESTIGE AND MONEY, AND PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT, FLEXIBILITY IN ARRANGING ONE'S SCHEDULE, TOO FREQUENTLY HAVE NOT ACCRUED TO THE CONSCIENTIOUS CLASSROOM TEACHER WHO, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, AND YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT, INSURES THAT GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN ARE WELL EDUCATED.

WE STILL SEE THE EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHER LURED INTO THE SEEMINGLY HIGHER STATUS WORLD OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING, OR THE DEDICATED SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER DISCOVERING QUICKLY THAT HIS SERVICE (I PURPOSELY DID NOT SAY "HIS OR HER") IS MORE HONORED AS A FOOTBALL COACH. WE SEE DYNAMIC

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS STRIVING TO BECOME ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS; AND MATH INSTRUCTORS ABANDONING SUCCESSFUL CAREERS IN TEACHING ALGEBRA IN ORDER TO MOVE TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE TO DEAL WITH BUDGET AND NOT CHILDREN.

I AM NOT SAYING THAT ANY OF THESE CHANGES IS UNWORTHY, ONLY THAT THEY EXEMPLIFY THE CONTINUING PHENOMENON TO MOVE FROM SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM TO SOMETHING ELSE. THIS, I BELIEVE, WOULD HAPPEN LESS FREQUENTLY IF THE SIGNALS FROM THE SOCIETY WERE LESS MIXED.

A SECOND SET OF AMBIGUOUS SIGNALS WHICH THE SCHOOLS ARE RECEIVING HAS TO DO WITH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLING AND SOCIAL MOBILITY. WE HAVE IN MANY CASES FORGOTTEN THAT ONE REASON HISTORICALLY THAT SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN BRINGING ABOUT BETTER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS FOR STUDENTS IS THAT THE SCHOOLS HAVE PROVIDED THE ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE, TO MANIPULATE SYMBOLS AND TO MAKE INDEPENDENT JUDGMENTS -- IN SHORT THE SCHOOLS HAVE CONCENTRATED ON LITERACY BROADLY DEFINED -- AND IN SO DOING UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY HAS SOMETIMES BEEN THE RESULT. SOCIAL MOBILITY WAS MUCH EASIER WHEN ONLY A FRACTION OF THE POPULATION GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL -- LESS THAN 50% OF THE AGE GROUP UNTIL 1948 - AND LESS THAT 25% OF THE AGE GROUP GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE AS RECENTLY AS 1970. FREQUENTLY, IN RECENT YEARS WE HAVE CONFUSED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALONE WITH SOCIAL MOBILITY, FORGETTING THAT A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER FACTORS BESIDES SCHOOLING HELP TO DETERMINE UPWARD MOBILITY OR ITS ABSENCE.

A THIRD AND RELATED AREA OF AMBIGUITY IS THE SIGNAL THE SCHOOLS ARE RECEIVING ABOUT THE LEVEL OF LITERACY THEY ARE EXPECTED TO INCULCATE. ONE OF THE FEARS I HAVE ABOUT THE MINIMUM COMPETENCY MOVEMENT IS THAT ITS SIGNALS ABOUT THE MINIMUM WILL OVERRIDE THE SIMULTANEOUS NEED IN THE SOCIETY THAT STUDENTS BE EDUCATED TO EVEN HIGHER LEVELS. AT THE VERY TIME WHEN SURVIVAL IN THE WORLD OF WORK NECESSITATES HIGHER AND HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION, POLITICAL BODIES ACROSS AMERICA ARE DEMANDING AND IN SOME CASES DETERMINING, IN A VERY SPECIFIC WAY, MINIMUM STANDARDS. I HOPE THAT WE CAN USE MINIMUM STANDARDS TO HELP US MEASURE THE SUCCESS WE ARE HAVING IN HELPING STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL. THE SIGNALS FROM THOSE ADVOCATING MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING ARE NOT CLEAR ON THAT ISSUE. THE NEEDS OF THE WORKPLACE FOR HIGHER AND HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE ARE CLEAR.

SO LET ME INSERT ANOTHER SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF THE AMBIGUOUS SIGNALS WHICH OUR SOCIETY GIVES TO OUR SCHOOLS: SEX EDUCATION.

IN THE NINETEEN SIXTIES WE SAW A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUALITY. SOME HAVE ARGUED THAT YOUTH HAS IN FACT LED THE ADULT SEGMENT OF THE SOCIETY AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL NOTIONS OF MORALITY, AND THE RESULT HAS BEEN A GENERAL LOOSENING OF OUR ATTITUDES ABOUT WHAT IS MORAL AND WHAT IS NOT.

PERPLEXED ABOUT WHAT ITS OWN VALUES SHOULD BE, THE ADULT SOCIETY HAS AS IT USUALLY DOES, TURNED TO THE SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES. THE SIGNAL WAS GIVEN THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE SEX EDUCATION. BUT, AS IS THE CASE WHEN THE SOCIETY IS UNSURE OF ITS OWN VALUES, WE HAVE IN FACT PUT OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT POSITION OF TRYING TO DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CONGRUENT WITH UNARTICULATED GOALS. INEVITABLY AND, I THINK UNDERSTANDABLY, WHEN THE SCHOOLS ARE HANDED SUCH A VALUE LADEN ISSUE WITH NO PARTICULAR AGREEMENT IN THE SOCIETY ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE IT, THE SCHOOLS TAKE A POSITION AS NEAR NEUTRALITY AS THEY CAN FIND. UNDER PRESSURE TO "DO SOMETHING ABOUT" SEX EDUCATION, AND RECEIVING NO CLEAR SET OF STANDARDS, THE SCHOOLS TURNED COMPLICATED AND DIFFICULT MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS SURROUNDING HUMAN SEXUALITY INTO SIMPLE SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS. WE HANDED THE SCHOOLS A COMPELLING ETHICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUBJECT WITH THE IMPLICIT UNDERSTANDING THAT INSTRUCTION IN THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE "VALUE FREE" BECAUSE THERE WAS ABSENCE OF CONSENSUS ABOUT THE VALUES. OF COURSE, SUCH LACK OF CONSENSUS IS WHAT SENT THE SUBJECT TO THE SCHOOLS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THIS FIRST ASSERTION, THEN, THAT WE ARE IN A PERIOD LACKING CONSENSUS ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING, IS PRELUDE TO THE SECOND THAT RESEARCHERS IN EDUCATION HAVE AVOIDED TOPICS WHICH MIGHT HELP INFORM IF NOT RESOLVE THIS AMBIGUITY AND HAVE TENDED INSTEAD TO CONCENTRATE ON STUDIES WHICH APPEAL TO THEIR PEERS, EITHER IN RELATED EDUCATIONAL FIELDS, OR IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

OF COURSE, THERE IS NO NECESSARY DISPARITY BETWEEN DEBATES AMONG ACADEMICS AND THE LARGER ISSUES OF EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY. MY ARGUMENT IS THAT AS WE CHOOSE TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED, THEY OUGHT TO FLOW MORE OFTEN FROM THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WE ARE HAVING IN DEFINING OUR EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND LESS FROM THE FASHIONS OF ACADEME.

I WOULD ARGUE FURTHER THAT THE MEMBERSHIP OF AESA IS UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO INFORM PUBLIC DEBATE BECAUSE OF YOUR SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY. AS MY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS INDICATE, I AM NOT UNAWARE OF THE DISTINGUISHED HISTORY OF EFFORTS BY YOU AND YOUR PREDECESSORS IN THIS AREA. I THINK, HOWEVER, THAT WE MUST CONTINUALLY REMIND OURSELVES THAT THE LEGITIMACY OF THESE EFFORTS STEMS FROM THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY INFORM SOCIETAL DEBATE. AS A VETERAN OF MANY BATTLES ABOUT WHETHER HISTORY OF EDUCATION 101 IS MORE APPROPRIATE THAN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY 102 OR WHETHER PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY FROM WILLIAM JAMES TO B. F. SKINNER OUGHT TO BE REPLACED IN THE CATALOGUE WITH THE NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE RECENTLY REMODELED BY THE ALL-FACULTY CORE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE, I ALSO KNOW THAT IT IS EASY SOMETIMES TO BE DISTRACTED.

I AM REMINDED, HOWEVER, THAT DEWEY WAS AN EARLY ACTIVIST IN THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND THAT COUNTS WAS A KNOWLEDGEABLE PARTICIPANT IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY SURROUNDING EDUCATION ISSUES IN NEW YORK CITY. I AM NOT ADVOCATING THAT YOU OUGHT TO RUSH OUT TO DECLARE CANDIDACY IN THE NEXT SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION, BUT I DO THINK THAT PRECISELY BECAUSE WE LIVE IN A PERIOD WHEN THERE IS SUCH NEED TO CLARIFY BASIC ISSUES ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE, WE SHOULD BE TAKING AS MANY CUES AS POSSIBLE FROM A VARIETY OF ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL BODIES WHEN WE CONSIDER THE ISSUES WE ADDRESS. AGAIN, I AM NOT ADVOCATING THAT YOU BECOME HIGH CLASS JOURNALISTS CHASING CURRENTLY HOT TOPICS AND PRODUCING ELEGANT ANALYSIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE (ALTHOUGH IN SOME CASES, THAT MIGHT BE AN IMPROVEMENT).

IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE YOU ENJOY THE LUXURY OF CONTEMPLATION AND OF KNOWLEDGE OF MANY DIFFERENT FIELDS OF STUDY, THAT YOUR PERSPECTIVE IS NECESSARY IN THE CURRENT SCENE.

THE FACT THAT AESA MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES THOSE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN SO MANY DIFFERENT ACADEMIC SUBJECTS SHARING A COMMON FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IS AN ASSET OF ENORMOUS VALUE. SOMETIMES I THINK WE TEND TO DIVIDE ISSUES UP AMONG THE DISCIPLINES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE TOPIC I AM SUGGESTING, CLARIFYING EDUCATIONAL GOALS AS THEY ARE DEFINED BY OUR SYSTEM OF LAY AND LOCAL CONTROL, BELONGS TO THE POLITICAL SCIENTIST, WHILE TOPICS WHICH INVOLVE DIRECT ANALYSIS OF ALREADY EXTANT TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES BELONG TO PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY. FURTHER WE TEND SOMETIMES, ALTHOUGH I THINK LESS NOW THAN IN THE PAST, TO VIEW THE PROCESS WHEREBY THE

VARIOUS OTHER ARTS AND SCIENCES DISCIPLINES RELATE TO EDUCATION AS ESSENTIALLY A MATTER OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT. ANTHROPOLOGISTS WORK ON DESIGNING ANTHROPOLOGY CURRICULA FOR THE SCHOOLS RATHER THAN ON BRINGING TO BEAR THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF ETHNOGRAPHY TO STUDYING THE WAYS IN WHICH OUR SOCIETY SHAPES ITS SCHOOLING. I USE THE ANTHROPOLOGY EXAMPLE, OF COURSE, BECAUSE IT ILLUSTRATES WELL A FIELD WHERE THE TRANSITION FROM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TO ENGAGEMENT IN POLICY ISSUES HAS RECENTLY BEEN SO DRAMATIC.

AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION WE ARE, OF COURSE, FACED WITH THE SAME SET OF PROBLEMS. HOW DO WE DESIGN AND SPONSOR RESEARCH WHICH WILL ADDRESS ISSUES OF EQUITY AND IMPROVING LOCAL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE? THESE ARE THE ISSUES WHICH OUR CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE EMPHASIZES AND ONES WHICH I BELIEVE ARE THE FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ISSUES. HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT THIS WORK INFORMS PUBLIC DEBATE AND IS HELPFUL TO THOSE WHO MUST DEAL WITH THE QUESTIONS OF WHAT OUR SCHOOLS SHOULD BE DOING?

LET ME USE OUR EQUITY MANDATE AS AN EXAMPLE, NOT ONLY OF THE ISSUES WHICH WE AT NIE FACE, BUT WHICH ALL OF US CONCERNED WITH THE STUDY OF EDUCATION FACE. ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY CLEARLY IS ONE OF, IF NOT THE PREEMINENT CHALLENGE OF OUR SCHOOLS. IT ALSO

HAPPENS TO BE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF AN AREA WHERE THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM LABORS MIGHTILY UNDER THE STRAIN OF IMPRECISE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SOCIETY AT LARGE.

WE ARE USING A WORKING DEFINITION OF EQUITY RESEARCH WHICH HOLDS THAT SUCH STUDIES SHOULD FOSTER OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WAYS OF REDUCING THE PREDICTIVE VALUE OF RACE, SEX, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. LAST SPRING WE ANNOUNCED GRANTS TO BE AWARDED FOR DESEGREGATION STUDIES, FOR STUDIES ON BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR WOMEN, FOR STUDIES IN MULTICULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND FOR WORK IN WHAT WE HAVE CALLED EDUCATIONAL EQUITY THEORIES. IN THAT LATER RATHER BROAD CATEGORY WE CLEARLY NEED THE APPLICATION OF MANY DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES TO EXAMINE SUCH TOPICS AS:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESULTS;

WAYS OF MEASURING PROGRESS OR LACK OF IT IN ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY;

STUDIES OF WAYS IN WHICH VARIOUS KINDS OF LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP STYLES INFLUENCE EQUITY;

AN EXAMINATION OF OTHER MULTICULTURAL, MULTIETHNIC SOCIETIES AND WHETHER THEIR EXPERIENCES CAN BE USEFUL IN AMERICAN EDUCATION;

WE EVEN SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF A STUDY WHICH WOULD ASSESS WAYS IN WHICH OUR KNOWLEDGE OF DIET AND NUTRITION HAVE AN EFFECT ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND WHETHER THESE FACTORS MIGHT BE IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING INEQUITIES IN EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

THE RANGE OF ISSUES RAISED BY THIS SINGLE QUESTION OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IS, AS YOU CAN SEE, VERY GREAT. YET IT IS CLEARLY A RANGE OF QUESTIONS WHICH OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM MUST ADDRESS IF IT IS TO PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE GOALS. THE RANGE ALSO IS SUGGESTIVE OF THE VALUE OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES IN THE BROAD DEFINITION WHICH AESA BRINGS TO THE TERM.

IN ESSENCE, I AM SUGGESTING THAT THERE IS A FORTUITOUS FIT BETWEEN THE NEED OF OUR SOCIETY TO CLARIFY ITS EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND THE EXPERTISE IN THE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY REPRESENTED IN THIS ASSOCIATION. I KNOW THAT THIS PHENOMENON IS NOT SERENDIPITOUS, THAT MANY OF YOU HAVE LABORED LONG TO INSURE THAT THERE EXISTS A MEANS FOR THE ENTIRE RANGE OF TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TO BE APPLIED TO THE BROAD ISSUES OF EDUCATION.

AS I THINK OF MY EXCITING DAYS AS AN ASSISTANT IN PROFESSOR BUTTS' SCHOOL AND SOCIETY COURSE, AND AS I REVIEW THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, I AM BOTH PROUD OF THE WORK WHICH HAS BEEN DONE IN THIS FIELD, AND I AM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES. I THINK WE MAY BE NEARING A TIME WHEN OUR INTRAMURAL DISPUTES ABOUT ACADEMIC LEGITIMACY WILL BE BEHIND US, AND WHEN THE COMPELLING FORCE OF THE NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES AND THE WORK WHICH ALL OF YOU HAVE BEEN DOING TO ENSURE THAT SUCH STUDIES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE WILL MEAN THAT THIS WORK WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIBERAL EDUCATION IN AMERICA.

THANK YOU.